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Weed Control Districts

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WEED CONTROL DISTRICTS

Weed Control Districts are municipal organizations formed to facilitate effective weed control within a local area. Districts may be formed by one or more municipalities, local government districts or incorporated urban centres and are responsible for enforcement of the Noxious Weed Act[1] as well as providing weed control information and services to the public. Before forming a district, the interested areas should ensure that the district is of a workable size, and that the assessment base is adequate to carry the weed program.

Weed Control Districts provide for trained personnel to enforce the Noxious Weeds Act and local sources of information on weed control. A unique service is the provision of on-farm visitations to identify weed problems and provide sound, integrated weed control recommendations. Other typical services include weed identification, sprayer calibration, awareness information for potential new or spreading weed problems and a general source of weed control information. The service is an extension of that available from the local agricultural representative, and provides for more detailed service to the public. Generally the weed supervisor works closely with the agricultural representative, the chemical industry representatives and local agribusiness as part of the overall information source available to farmers.

FORMATION

A Weed Control District may be formed by the agreement of one or more municipalities to combine for the purpose of carrying out a weed control program. Incorporated towns and villages may join the Weed Control District. To be eligible for financial assistance the formation of the Weed Control District must be approved by the Minister of Agriculture.

Assistance in formation of a weed board may be obtained by contacting your local agricultural representative or regional weed coordinator. It may also be beneficial to consult members of existing weed districts for opinions and advice.

[1]A current copy of the Noxious Weeds Act is supplied to each weed supervisor. Additional copies may be purchased from the Queen's Printer, 200 Vaughan Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 1T5.

Steps

1. The municipalities involved enter into an agreement to form a Weed Control District, establish a weed control board and by individual by-laws for each municipality, transfer all the powers, rights, functions and authority that the municipality, has under the Noxious Weeds Act to the Weed Control Board. Copies of a sample by-law and agreement are available from Manitoba Agriculture.

2. The Weed Control Board applies to the Minister of Agriculture for acceptance as an eligible Weed Control District, for the grant available to Weed Control Districts. A copy of the completed agreement and by-law should be attached to the letter of request.

3. Subsequent to being accepted by the Minister of Agriculture, the Weed Control District submits to Manitoba Agriculture a statement of estimated expenditures for the calendar year. This application must be on the current year's form provided by Manitoba Agriculture and submitted in duplicate with both copies signed by the chairman and secretary-treasurer of the Weed Control Board. Copies are to be submitted to the regional weed coordinator for Manitoba Agriculture.

4. The Regional Director for Manitoba Agriculture will appoint a departmental representative (usually the ag rep) to the weed board. This appointed representative is a full voting member but cannot be appointed as president, vice-president or secretary-treasurer of the board.

The Board

The Weed District Board is the governing body for a Weed Control District and has, as a result of the by-laws, all the power given under the Noxious Weeds Act to a municipality. The board has control of the activities and program of the weed supervisor.

Membership - The board shall consist of:

a) Two appointed members of each rural municipal council participating, and one appointed member of each urban council participating.

The representatives from each council shall be appointed for definite periods by resolution of their council. Some overlap of appointments is desirable to maintain continuity of board activities.

b) The appointee of the Regional Director for the agricultural region in which the headquarters of the Weed Control District is situated.

c) One or more rate payers of each participating municipality, appointed by that municipality (optional).

Terms of Reference

a) The authority for weed control as outlined under the Noxious Weeds Act shall be delegated to the Weed Control Board as per Section 31 (5) of the Noxious Weeds Act.

b) Each Weed Control Board shall meet regularly, at least every second month commencing in April through to the end of October of each year, and meet at least once from November to the following April.

c) The Weed Control Board shall be responsible for hiring the Weed Supervisor and any Assistant Weed Supervisors to be employed by the Weed Control District; to approve all expeditures; to prepare the financial budgets for the year (anticipated and annual), and to carry out all the responsibilities as designated and defined for weed control under the Noxious Weeds Act.

d) The Weed Control Board is responsible for identifying the program objectives of the district, for providing general guidance to the Weed Supervisor and for evaluation of the program conducted by the supervisor.

The duties, powers and responsibilities for carrying out weed control within the boundaries of the municipalities participating in this program, are the responsibility of the Weed Control Board. The weed board acts as an agent of the municipalities and therefore the municipalities are liable for any legal action that may be taken against the weed board and the weed supervisor. Board members must be aware of their responsibility to their own municipality as well as to the other municipalities participating in the Weed Control District.

Weed boards should ensure that adequate insurance is in effect to protect the weed supervisor, the board and the municipalities in the event of property damage or other legal action. Guideline should be established by the board to ensure that activities of the weed supervisor do not extend beyond the coverage available.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Participating Municipalities:

Each municipality shall have the following responsibilities in the operation of a Weed Control District:

a) Pass a By-law authorizing the municipality to enter into an agreement with other municipalities for the purpose of forming a Weed Control District and transferring authority for weed control for the municipality to the joint committee which shall be known as the Weed Control Board.

b) Appoint membership as outlined in Section (a) and (c) under "Membership". It is recommended that each council appoint an alternate who can be available for meeetings when one of the regular members cannot attend.

c) Approve money for the Weed Control Board in accordance with budget requirements set by the Weed Control Board for the operations of the Weed Control District.

d) Provide funds for chemicals and other costs as determined and approved by the Weed Control Board.

e) All members of council must support the decisions of the Weed Control Board.

It is recommended that the entire council of each participating municipality be made aware of the objectives, the programs, the activities of the Weed Control Board, and from time to time tour the entire Weed Control District to see the problems, results, etcetera and become better acquainted with the control program.

Responsibilities of Weed Control Board:

When each participating municipality has appointed their representative as outlined previously, this group shall be known as the Weed Control Board. The Board shall meet for the purpose of setting up officers and preparing their work program. The Board will be responsible to:

a) elect a chairman, vice-chairman and appoint a secretary-treasurer;

NOTE: The secretary-treasurer may be elected from the Board or be appointed from outside the voting delegates. Remuneration for this position may be made by the Board. No representative of Manitoba Agriculture may fill any of these executive positions.

b) establish a definite meeting date for regular meetings and make it possible for special meetings to be called by the Chairman of the Board or by the regional weed coordinator:

c) engage a permanent Weed Control Supervisor;

d) prepare an anticipated budget and submit this to the regional weed coordinator (prior to March 1 each year) for approval of grant payment;

e) apportion the costs for operating the Weed Control District to the participating municipalities and submit a statement to the respective municipalities for payment to the Board's secretary;

f) define the working conditions for the Weed Control Supervisor and develop with him a planned program in weed control. This will entail a definition of duties and responsibilities, field of operation, reports, educational displays, meetings , field days and a tour of each ward with responsible councillor. These programs should be evaluated from time to time in planning future operations.

g) arrange for a regular report on Weed Control Board activities to respective municipal councils to keep the entire council informed on all activities;

h) enforce the Noxious Weeds Act and make sure proper procedure is carried out by the Weed Control Supervisor;

i) prepare a year end financial statement and arrange for an audited financial statement to be provided to the regional weed coordinator prior to August 1 of each year.

The action of the members of the Weed Control Board, in supporting the weed control program and the Weed Supervisor, for the improvement of weed control within the District will reflect favorably on their respective councils. It can serve to improve the possible financial return to farmers from their farming operation. Special consideration should be given in respect to weed control projects in towns and villages to improve the appearance, remove potential weed threats and, in general, secure the overall district from problem weeds.

The Weed Control Supervisor

The Weed Control Supervisor's responsibility lies in three areas - EDUCATION, SERVICE AND REGULATORY.

Education

The most important feature is educational information on weeds and their control to farmers, municipal organizations, towns people and agri business dealers and agents. This is the positive aspect of weed control; it puts money into people's pockets through increased yields, increased land and property values. Through education, people are alerted to new weeds which can be stopped before they develop into widespread problems that would be costly to control or eradicate. Above all, a strong educational program makes it possible for people to help themselves.

Service

Activity in this area is to provide a service to the community by assisting in the control of weeds on public properties such as roadsides, railway right's-of-way, drainage ditches, town streets and boulevards. It enables development of an organized program to control special weeds such as scentless chamomile, nodding thistle, red bartsia, bugloss, stork's bill, leafy spurge, toadflax, tansy, milkweed, bladder campion and others. A good service program arranges for on-site calls to give specific information for control measures. It may include weed identification, calibration of spray equipment, and spot treatment of specific weeds.

Regulatory

Under the Noxious Weeds Act, the owner or occupant is responsible for control of weeds on his property. Enforcement of the Act is the responsibility of the Weed Control District. It is the duty of the Weed Supervisor, under direction of the Weed Control Board, to see that owners or occupants have controlled weed problems.

The authority of the Weed Act is normally used only after education and persuasion have failed to bring about weed control. The Act is an important aid in assuring that weed control measures are undertaken when necessary.

Regular Duties of Weed Control Supervisor

A. Establish an office and an office routine.

1. If there are two or more rural municipalities in a district, it may be desirable to spend a proportion of time in each office.

2. Be available to take calls at appropriate time, especially during the busy spray season.

3. Set up a working arrangement to record calls when away from the office.

4. Review and revise land and property owner lists each year.

5. Keep a record of all chemical recommendations given to public. Follow up, if possible, to assess results of these recommendations.

6. Keep an accurate inventory of chemicals used for special weed problems. Determine future needs.

7. Process costs and billing to various organizations.

8. Keep a daily record of activities.

9. Keep maps and detailed records of roadside spraying.

10. Prepare complete monthly reports for Weed Boards and the regional weed coordinator.

11. Prepare a yearly work schedule.

12. Prepare an annual report of all weed activities. Take these to councils. Write letters of appreciation to all cooperating agencies at end of season. Enclose a copy of annual report to them.

13. Evaluate the year's program. Concentrate to improve. Discuss with Board.

B. Establish a desirable public image.

1. Compile an inventory of all of the resources in a district, such things as people, organizations, facilities, utilities, problem farmers, farmers with specific weed problems. Think and plan how to make use of these.

2. Visit councillors, chemical dealers, elevator agents, feed mill operators, seed cleaning plant operators, custom applicators. They have information that may provide help on weed problems.

3. Attend council meetings systematically. Make appointments, secure a time to be heard. Solicit their help.

4. Visit all parts of the district systematically, avoiding neglect of the furthest corners.

5. Set up a working arrangement with the agricultural representative. Get to know the regional agronomists, including the regional weed coordinator, the crops agronomist and the forage specialist.

6. Join organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Horticultural Society. Initiate and support activities such as "Clean Up Week" for the town or area.

7. Join social or service activities such as curling, the community centre or others, but ensure that such activities do not appear as a neglect of the job.

8. Attend certain meetings on an informal basis - farmer meetings, Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Society.

C. Maintain technical competence and resource materials.

1. Keep up to date on latest techniques of weed control.

2. Have a thorough knowledge of the common weeds. Know how to prepare plant specimens for identification.

3. Maintain a presentable supply of pressed weed mounts and weed seed specimens for identification purposes. Collect new species each year. Renew damaged material. Weed Supervisors may expand their collection through exchanges with other supervisors.

4. Prepare and study maps of weed infestations in the area.

5. Prepare news items and circulars relative to weeds for local news media. Consult with agricultural representative in this activity.

6. Prepare materials for meetings. To do this properly requires considerable time.

7. Attend weed schools and the Weed Supervisors' Summer education tour.

8. Complete the correspondence training program.

D. Educational activities

1. Hold educational meetings, present information at farm meetings, 4-H, school board, Horticultural Society, Agricultural Society, dealer meetings and high schools.

2. Set out demonstration plots in farmers' fields to show recommended weed control practices, e.g. chemicals for special crops. Line up cooperators ahead of time. Planning is essential to establish purpose, method and result.

3. Assist in setting out field experiments of new products for weed control. Line up cooperators for these.

4. Arrange for field days and tours of above items (2 and 3).

5. Arrange Weed Board tours to keep members informed.

6. Set up and man booths of educational nature at fairs.

7. Cooperate with other weed supervisors to organize and operate educational programs which cover more than one weed district, e.g. booth at Weed Fairs.

8. Conduct surveys such as chemical use and dockage records for the district.

9. Make weed counts of various types in farmers' fields. Weed losses can then be measured against known competition studies by research workers.

10. Promote the use of tarps as a means of reducing weed spread and grain loss.

11. Promote the cleaning of harvesting machinery through dealers as well as farmers.

12. Know how to use a camera, slide projector and overhead projector.

E. Service

1. Organize a systematic weed program with the public utilities people; Highways, Railways, Drainage, well in advance of spray season. This means figuring of costs, hiring operators and equipment. It may be desirable to develop a three or five year plan.

2. Make systematic quarter-section inspections to know the weed problems. Include pastures, haylands, waste areas, railway right's-of-way, roads, highways, gravel pits, recreational areas, water supplies, shelterbelts, nuisance grounds.

3. Be responsible for roadside spray operations, stressing efficiency and safety in use of chemicals.

4. Make suitable arrangements with town councils for weed control. The area covers boulevards, streets, lanes, nuisance grounds, golf courses, vacant lots, cemetaries, swimming pool areas, playgrounds, parks, school yards and industrial sites. Demonstrate new equipment to potential users, boulevard and lawn sprayers to individuals and also groups such as school boards. Have them hire workers and equipment. At the same time, demonstrate safe and practical methods of weed control.

5. Clean, repair, and store equipment. Make suggestions for change and improvement.

6. Visit people when asked to give specific help for weed control. Identify with the person, the weed, its stage of growth, give control measures, record what they are, come back later in the season to see the results.

F. Regulatory

1. Have a thorough knowledge of the Noxious Weeds Act.

2. Check neglected areas and poor cooperators. Recheck to insure timely action. Keep an up-to-date list.

3. Visit occupants of neglected land, issue notices, have weeds destroyed and, where necessary, lay charges. Have operators and machinery lined up ahead of time to do the job if owner defaults.

4. Try to handle neglected areas before complaints arise.

5. Investigate and record action on all complaints.

6. Carry out machinery inspections in the district and at border crossings.

7. Check on hay and grain movement to prevent spread of weeds.

8. Anticipate problems and initiate remedial action on 3, 6, and 7.

The weed control supervisor is the coordinator of programs that can make people aware of existing problèms in weed control and present them with solutions to those problems. He must be courteous, present a good appearance, display good judgement and practical common sense. He must be dedicated and willing to lend himself to serve a purpose. Above all, the weed supervisor must taken an active role in initiating weed control programs.

Financing

The cost of operations of a Weed Control District shall be borne by the participating municipalities, rural and urban, with financial assistance from Manitoba Agriculture. Municipal cost of operation shall be shared as determined by mutual agreement at the time of organization, and may be revised annually by mutual agreement as necessary to meet financial commitments.

The grant to Weed Control Districts is based on 50% eligible expenditures to a maximum level. Eligible expenditures include the salary of the full-time weed supervisor and expenses of the supervisor, including travel, educational programs, demonstration projects, meals and lodging. Office expenses are not eligible for grant payment.

Information on current grant levels and forms required for application for grant payment are available from Manitoba Agriculture. Contact the regional weed coordinator.

Training

Proper training of weed supervisors is essential for an effective weed control program. Suitable background experience provides a sound base for on the job training and formal education.

Manitoba Agriculture provides three specific training programs:

a) a two-year correspondence course

b) two one-week schools each year

c) an annual summer tour

POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR WEED SUPERVISOR

General

This is a full working level for experienced weed supervisors. Incumbents are responsible for delivery of a relatively complex program related to all aspects of weed control. Individuals require a comprehensive technical knowledge of weed identification, herbicide activity and selection and weed control equipment operation.

Typical Duties

1. Promotes improved agricultural methods through practical demonstrations and distribution of information and instructions related to all aspects of weed control.

2. Organizes and conducts public meetings and short courses related to all aspects of weed control. Also assists Manitoba Agriculture staff at public meetings and short courses.

3. Prepares newspaper columns, newsletter items, radio and TV interviews to disseminate weed control information of local interest.

4. Provides an information service to the public by responding to individual requests for information or recommendations on all aspects of weed control, with specific emphasis on sprayer calibration, weed identification and selection of control methods.

5. Organizes and supervises specific weed control projects as identified by the weed district board.

6. Determine, in consultation with municipal councillors, roadside weed control requirements, and plans the annual weed control program to be carried out on municipal properties.

7. Enforce the Noxious Weeds Act, with general guidance from the weed district board, through systematic inspections, serving of notices, arranging for control methods where notice is not complied with, and notification to weed board secretary of billing requirements.

8. May be required to supervise one or more part-time weed supervisors or spray truck operators.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge, Abilities and Skills

Ability to communicate with farmers and others through individual contacts and through meetings and short courses, ability to establish and maintain effective public relations.

Specialized technical knowledge of weed control.

Good knowledge of agricultural production in Manitoba.

Good knowledge of extension methods.

Ability to plan, organize and supervise the activities of part-time subordinate staff.

Education, Training and Experience

Education equivalent to Grade XII and completion of training programs as prescribed by Manitoba Agriculture.

Farm background or equivalent experience required.

Graduation from a recognized Diploma course an asset.